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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Hans-Peter Glanzer (Austria), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.22

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/188 of 22 December 1992, 48/191 of 21 December 1993, 49/234 of 23 December 1994, 50/112 of 20 December 1995, 51/180 of 16 December 1996 and 51/238 of 17 June 1997,

Noting with satisfaction that a large number of States have ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and calling upon other States to take appropriate action to that end,

Noting that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5 of its resolution 51/180, the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was convened from 29 September to 10 October 1997 in Rome and that it was attended by one hundred and two parties and by a large number of observers from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Italy for the generous manner in which it hosted the first session of the Conference of the

Parties and to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the facilities it provided,

Recognizing the contribution to the Convention process of the interim secretariat of the Convention, within the framework of the former Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat, as well as the support provided to the interim secretariat by all bilateral and multilateral contributors, including regional and non-governmental organizations,

Recognizing also the support provided during the interim phase of the Convention to the launching of national, subregional and regional action programme processes in response to the resolution on urgent action for Africa, as well as the support provided to the interim activities in other regions carried out by Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as by specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's offer to provide administrative and support arrangements in the framework of an institutional linkage for the Convention secretariat with the United Nations,

Taking note also of the decision of the Conference of the Parties, on the basis of the Secretary-General's offer, that the Convention secretariat should be institutionally linked to the United Nations, while not being fully integrated into the work programme and management structure of any particular department or programme,

Taking note further of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, its subsidiary bodies and its permanent secretariat adopted at its first session, whereby, inter alia, the Secretary-General, at 1 January 1999, is requested to establish trust funds (general, supplementary and special funds) for the purposes of the Convention, to be managed by the head of the Convention secretariat, in accordance with the relevant financial rules and within the duly delegated authority,

Taking note of the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its first session that the General Assembly be requested to decide, bearing in mind the institutional linkage of the Convention secretariat to the United Nations and the large number of States that are Parties to the Convention, to finance from the regular programme budget of the United Nations the conference-servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies for the duration of the institutional linkage,

Taking note of the reports of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, on its tenth session, held in New York from 6 to 17 January 1997,[1] and its resumed tenth session, held at Geneva from 18 to

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[1] A/52/82.

22 August 1997,[2] and the report of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on its first session,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/180[3] in particular paragraph 15,

1. Approves the institutional linkage between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations, in accordance with the offer made by the Secretary-General and as accepted by the Conference of the Parties at its first session;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to review the functioning of the institutional linkage, including the financing arrangements, not later than 31 December 2000, in consultation with the Conference of the Parties, with a view to making such modifications as may be considered desirable by the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties, and to report thereon to the Assembly;

3. Notes that the Conference of the Parties has decided to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to host the Convention secretariat at Bonn, and expresses its appreciation for the support offered by the future host Government with respect to the relocation and effective functioning of the Convention secretariat;

4. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Switzerland, which hosted the interim secretariat, and to the Government of Canada and the Government of Spain, which offered to host the Convention secretariat, and invites them to continue to support the permanent secretariat and to contribute to the implementation of the Convention;

5. Welcomes the selection, by the Conference of the Parties at its first session, of the International Fund for Agricultural Development to house the Global Mechanism and, in accordance with Conference decision 24, invites the Fund, as the lead organization, to cooperate fully with the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank;

6. Takes note of the statement of the President of the Conference of the Parties at the closing of the first session and, in this context, invites the Conference of the Parties to facilitate the elaboration of an additional regional implementation annex to the Convention for the countries of the eastern and central European region to be launched at the second session of the Conference of the Parties in 1998, in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Convention, and with a view to finalizing it as soon as possible;

7. Urges Governments and all interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make promptly the voluntary contributions necessary to ensure that the Global Mechanism can begin operating on 1 January 1998;

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[2] A/52/82/Add.1.

[3] A/52/549.

8. Requests the Secretary-General, bearing in mind the decision taken by the Conference of the Parties at its first session:

(a) To authorize the interim secretariat established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/188 to act as the secretariat for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties until the permanent secretariat designated by the Conference of the Parties begins operating by 1 January 1999;

(b) To maintain the arrangements within the current programme budget for the interim secretariat to support the Convention until the permanent secretariat begins operating by 1 January 1999 and to maintain the arrangements relating to extrabudgetary funds;

9. Notes with appreciation the contributions made to the Trust Fund established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/188, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund to support the interim secretariat, the work of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties;

10. Notes also with appreciation the contributions made to the Special Voluntary Fund established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/188 to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations of developing countries, to participate fully and effectively in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other organizations to continue to contribute generously to the Special Voluntary Fund also for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to close, on 31 December 1998, the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund established under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/188 and to transfer any amounts remaining in the Trust Fund and in the Special Voluntary Fund as of 31 December 1998, respectively, to the supplementary fund to be established pursuant to paragraph 9 of the financial rules and to the special fund to be established in accordance with paragraph 10 of the financial rules;

12. Renews its appeal to Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, as well as to non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to continue to contribute generously to the two extrabudgetary funds mentioned above for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties;

13. Calls upon all countries that are not parties to the Convention to take appropriate action for the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Convention;

14. Stresses the necessity to advance, as soon as possible, the full implementation of the Convention and, in this context, calls upon Governments of affected countries, as a matter of priority, to accelerate the processes of elaboration of national, sub-regional and regional action programmes, and calls upon the international community, in particular the developed countries, and the United Nations system, and invites the multilateral financial institutions and all other interested actors, to support the efforts of affected developing countries in these processes by providing financial resources and other forms of assistance, in accordance with the relevant articles of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties;

15. Urges all States that are parties to the Convention to pay promptly and in full on the first month of each year, starting on 1 January 1999, the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention envisaged in the financial rules, so as to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the subsidiary bodies, the permanent secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

16. Calls upon all countries, in particular developed countries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the trust funds (general, supplementary and special funds) to be established by the Secretary-General on 1 January 1999, in conformity with the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, in order to facilitate activities under the Convention and to support the participation of representatives of developing and, in particular, least developed, country parties affected by desertification and/or drought, particularly those in Africa, as well as the participation of some representatives of non-governmental organizations of those countries in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies;

17. Decides to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1998-1999 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for that biennium, taking into account the request of the Conference of the Parties;

18. Takes note of the transitional arrangement for administrative support to the Convention secretariat, outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 51/180,[3] with particular reference to the implications arising from the report of the Conference of the Parties on its first session, which should facilitate the establishment and relocation of the Convention secretariat and assist it in addressing any initial financial and personnel problems that may be encountered in this context;

19. Welcomes with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Senegal to host the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Dakar from 30 November to 11 December 1998;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, multilateral and bilateral financial institutions and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as to non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

21. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to it, at its fifty-third session, on the implementation of the present resolution;

22. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa".